CHAPTER

History and Architecture

2

Y ou are the next chapter in the history of your district. You have an important responsibility as a steward of a property in a historically significant area. When you contemplate making changes to your property, consider those options that contribute to that history rather than detract from it.

The first map of Loudoun County showing building locations and property owners names was made by local mapmaker, Yardley Taylor, in 1853.

A. OVERVIEW

### 1. General Loudoun County History and Development

Loudoun County was formed from a portion of Fairfax County in 1757. It was named for John Campbell, the fourth Earl of Loudoun. Campbell commanded the British army in the French and Indian War (1754-1763), prior to his appointment as Governor of Virginia in 1756.

The first settlers in the western section of Loudoun County arrived between 1725 and 1730. Most of the county's early inhabitants came from Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Maryland and reflected German, Irish, and Scots-Irish heritage. Among these first permanent settlers were the Quakers who settled in the present-day Waterford, Lincoln, Hamilton, and Unison. English settlers from Tidewater Virginia also settled in Loudoun, in the lower or eastern section of the county.

In 1774, two weeks after the Boston Port Bill closed the harbor as England's response to the Boston Tea Party, the citizens of Loudoun met. They adopted the Loudoun Resolves, which were subsequently presented to the General Assembly and the Continental Congress. In this document, county citizens stated their unwillingness to pay taxes without representation and elected to have no commercial relationship with Great Britain.

A. OVERVIEW, continued

1. General Loudoun County History and Development, continued
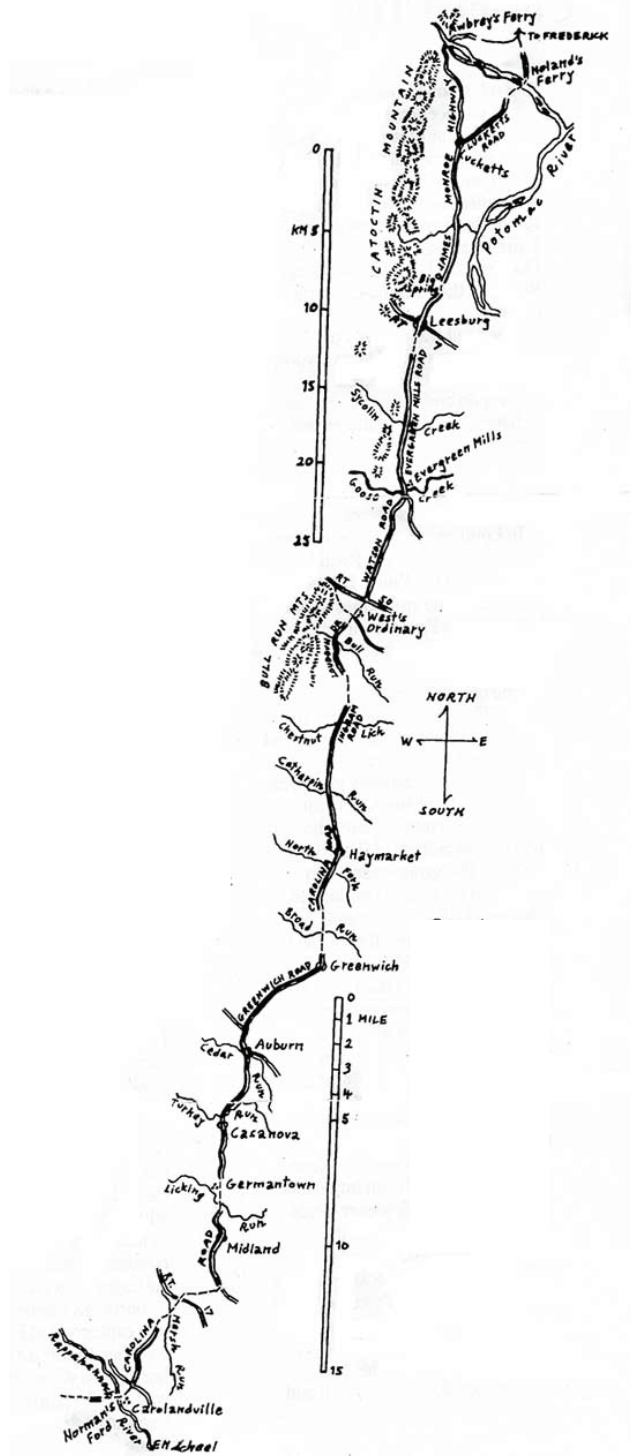
This late twentieth century map, drawn by Eugene Scheel, illustrates the route of the Carolina Road through Loudoun and Fauquier counties.

When Washington was burned by the British during the War of 1812, Loudoun County served as a haven for both President Madison (at Belmont) and important state papers including the Constitution (at Rokeby).

The Civil War split the county over secession. The Quakers and other northern and central county residents were against slavery and therefore against secession, while large landowners in the eastern portion favored secession.

A number of early trade routes including the Carolina Road (US Route 15), Leesburg Pike (Virginia State Route 7), the Little River Turnpike (US Route 50), and the Washington and Old Dominion Railroad bisect the county. Despite these heavily traveled routes, the relatively small farm size characteristic of the western portion of the county encouraged stability rather than a pattern of growth. The county remained primarily agricultural from its early settlement until the mid-twentieth century. Census numbers remained constant between 20,000 and 25,000 from 1790 until 1960.

The building of Dulles Airport in the 1960s coupled with the growth of suburban Washington, DC, has attracted more residents to the county and has resulted in a fifty percent population increase in each decade since the 1960s.

The 2006 population of the county was estimated at approximately 269,000 – an increase of 100,000 from 2000 and Loudoun has been noted in the past several years as one of the fastest growing counties in the entire country.

This early Main Street view in Aldie was published as a postcard by the Aldie Drug Store.

B. CHARACTER OF THE HISTORIC DISTRICTS

1. Aldie

Aldie is an early-nineteenth-century linear village built along the Little River Turnpike, now U.S. Route 50. To the east and west of the village lies open pastureland while more hilly terrain bounds the north and south. The Little River bisects the settlement and provided the water for the millrace.

In 1803, Charles Fenton Mercer built a Federal style brick house on a bluff overlooking the site of the future mill that he constructed six years later. Aldie Mill was named after an ancestral home in Scotland and the community grew around this mill complex.

The mill was built of locally made brick on a stone foundation. A rare decorative brick-diapering pattern (glazed headers arranged in a diamond pattern) adorns the west section. It is one of the best-preserved mill complexes in Virginia and was in continuous operation with its original machinery until 1981. Several other early residences survive including the miller's house and the home of the first postmaster.

The years following the Civil War brought expansion to the village including the establishment of the Stovepipe Academy along with a number of frame residences and three country churches built between 1882 and 1895. The frame Episcopal church is a good example of the Gothic Revival style.

A rise in commercial activity also followed the paving of the Turnpike in 1914 and sporadic residential building continued throughout the first half of the twentieth century.

The result is the small village of Aldie that has a certain randomness in its layout and design. Buildings and lots vary in size and setback. Many of the original dwellings have been converted to commercial uses. There are no sidewalks or other pedestrian amenities.

Old outbuildings can be found throughout the village and mature boxwood plantings accentuate many sites. Fences or walls delineate a number of them. Architectural styles range from Federal to Victorian and twentieth-century examples include the Colonial Revival and Bungalow styles.

The Aldie Mill was built by Charles Fenton Mercer in 1809.

Workers stopped for a moment while this late-nineteenth century photograph of a carriage shop in Aldie was taken.

This family posed in front of an early frame residence in Aldie. Note the later entry porch and picket fence visible in this turn-of-the-century image.

This historic views looks northwest from downtown Bluemont on Snickersville Turnpike.

New development was the result of the railroad arriving in Bluemont in 1900.

The Lynn Store was one of the general stores that served both residents and visitors to the mountain resort town. The Bluemont Store and the E.E. Lake Store are surviving examples.

B. CHARACTER OF THE HISTORIC DISTRICTS, continued

2. Bluemont

At 700 feet above sea level, Bluemont is the most elevated settlement in Loudoun County. This crossroads village is located on an early trade route where it came through a gap in the Blue Ridge Mountains that led to the Shenandoah Valley, known as William's or Snicker's Gap.

By 1760 the Snickers family had pioneered settlement of the area and taken over operation of the Shenandoah River ferry at the base of the mountain. In 1792 they sold their landholdings of over 600 acres to William Clayton. This purchase included the intersection of two trade routes, the Snickers Gap Road and the Snickers Gap-Leesburg Road. Clayton began to sell lots and establish the settlement of Snickersville at this intersection.

Settlers arrived in Snicker's Gap from Tidewater Virginia and from Pennsylvania in pursuit of inexpensive fertile soil to farm. As farms became established and the popularity of settlements in Loudoun County increased, merchants were needed to provide services and goods to travelers along this established trade route from the Shenandoah Valley to Alexandria. Shares were sold and the road was incorporated as the Snickersville Gap Turnpike in 1810. By 1824 the village was incorporated as a 10-acre town.

The Snickersville Turnpike (Loudoun County Road 734) as it would later be known connected the Shenandoah Valley to the Little River Turnpike near Aldie. Bluemont is located at the intersection of the turnpike with Harry Byrd Highway (State Route 7, Leesburg Turnpike).

As grain production in the Valley increased so did the development of the town. Local farmers for whom Snickersville was a regional commercial center also encouraged this growth and supported the school, church, doctor and other tradespeople listed on the 1830 census.

Although its strategic location made it a target during the Civil War, the town was able to rebound and the population doubled in the decade after the war. By 1870 there were 40 farmers in the area and twenty-four occupations supported by the town including carpenters, a stonemason and a stone fencer.

In the following years, Snickersville suffered two economic hardships. The first was the location of the Snickersville-Leesburg Turnpike to higher ground, essentially bypassing the town's commercial center. The second was the news, in 1873, that the Alexandria, Hampshire and Loudoun Railroad would not extend its line to Snickersville.

By the turn of the century, the railroad lines were extended to the town and the name changed to Bluemont to reflect the town's new identity. Snickersville successfully reinvented itself as a rural retreat for Washingtonians who built summerhouses and stayed in newly built inns.

Building activity in the early twentieth century centered on the land to the west of the railroad depot. New streets were laid out for residential development and boarding houses and hotels were built. A milling

company located in the village and grain elevators were constructed, as were a new store, bank, and post office. By the 1920s, the town had electricity, telephone and taxi service.

The Depression and subsequent rise of automobile travel marked the end of this period of Bluemont's prosperity. Fortuitously bypassed by development pressures in the second-half of the twentieth century, the village retains much of its character with representative structures from both of its eras of development.

The approach to this rural town from the east is through open farmland while from the west the town emerges from wooded mountain terrain. Mature trees line Snickersville Turnpike and sidewalks provide pedestrian paths through most of the village. Fences or stonewalls mark the boundaries of many lots while a number of outbuildings punctuate these parcels.

Relatively few structures remain from the early development of the village and the overall architectural character of the district is more representative of Bluemont's late-nineteenth century development. Predominantly frame structures line the turnpike road, interspersed with masonry buildings of various eras.

The oldest structure in the district is the two-story stone farmhouse of Amos Clayton built in 1797, Clayton Hall. Few residences built in the mid-nineteenth century survive. The 1840s Osburn/Scott House, however, may be the structure that best represents the evolution of Bluemont. Originally built as a shop and residence, it was updated with Italianate brackets at the eaves and a full-width front porch and became a boarding house in 1897. It is now a private residence.

Residences designed as summer houses for Washingtonians and built during Bluemont's boom years at the turn-of-the-century were often more fanciful than earlier structures. These frame residences often feature projecting gables and bays, turrets, scroll-sawn woodwork, and two-story gallery porches and are located on side streets to the west of the railroad depot. Smaller, Bungalow style cottages were also popular with vacationers and can be found in the higher elevations on the outskirts of the village.

The town's oldest church is the 1853 Bluemont Methodist, constructed of stone in a vernacular style. The Snickersville Academy, a single story log structure, served as the area's first school and may have been built as early as 1825. The front gabled Mountain Shadow School was built in 1872 while the Bluemont Community Center dates from the 1920s.

The 1888 vernacular frame Snickersville General Store is Bluemont's oldest commercial structure and continues to fulfill its original purpose. The other early store is the stucco-clad 1905 E.E. Lake General Store with its parapet roof and post office addition. Architectural styles range from the Federal to Queen Anne and Colonial Revival. Many residences are simple frame vernacular dwellings.
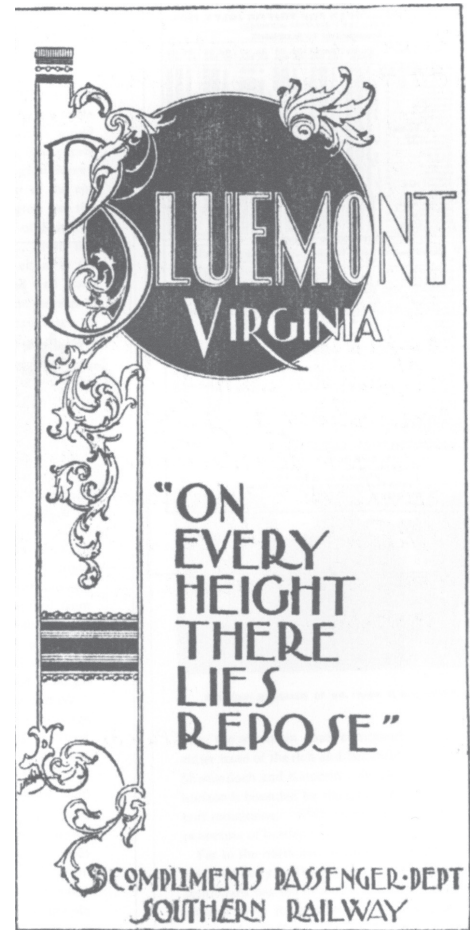
This brochure was published by Southern Railway in 1900 and touted the merits of Bluemont.

(far left) Oatlands was built between 1800 and 1803 by George Carter, a son of Robert "King" Carter.

(left) Through the donation of preservation easements much of the pastoral quality surrounding the property has been protected.

B. CHARACTER OF THE HISTORIC DISTRICTS, continued

3. Oatlands

The Oatlands Historic District is bisected by US Route 15 – James Monroe Highway and includes most parcels on both sides of this route. Land to the west is sloped and primarily wooded. To the east of the highway the character changes to gently rolling cleared pasture land.

Sited in the midst of this predominantly open land is the Oatlands mansion, a 300-acre National Historic Landmark property owned by the National Trust for Historic Preservation. The son of Robert "King" Carter, George Carter, built this plantation between 1800 and 1803. The house, gardens, and outbuildings were built to his design and were inspired by the 1786 Treatise on Civil Architecture by William Chambers. The complex is often noted as one of the most elaborate Federal style compounds in America.

The stuccoed brick main structure was built beginning in 1804. The five-part design consists of a center section of three stories to which a two-story classical portico was added in 1827. Two story wings with octagonal bays attach to the center section.

A tree-lined lane leads to brick gates and balustrade that mark the formal precinct of the house and its gardens. Outbuildings to the north and west of the house are balanced by terraced formal gardens to the east. Other outbuildings include a stone bank barn, an icehouse, and a greenhouse thought to be the oldest functioning such structure in the county. The Eustis family added a large frame carriage house to the property in a Colonial Revival/Craftsman style.

George Carter established the Oatlands Mill in 1816 at the intersection of Oatlands Road and the Leesburg-Aldie Turnpike. The mill registers record trade not only in the grinding of various types of grain, but also in plaster, wood, and carding. In 1832, the mill became the destination of the Goose Creek and Little River Navigation Company connecting portions of landlocked Loudoun County with the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal. Today the mill that supported the surrounding settlement is a ruin.

This small village also included a post office, school, and church. Founders of the Mountain Gap School purchased the land from George Carter in 1827 to establish a neighborhood school. The present red, one-room schoolhouse, however, dates to the late nineteenth century. It was the last one-room schoolhouse in the county when it closed in 1953. The 1878 Church of Our Savior replaced the former Oatlands Chapel that was established in an abandoned blacksmith's shop.

After the Civil War, changes in the Carter family finances necessitated operating the mansion as a boarding house. Unable to sustain the property, the family sold the plantation to Stilson Hutchins, the founder of the Washington Post, in 1897. Six years later Hutchins sold the property to William Corcoran Eustis, who with his wife Edith restored the house. At her death, Mrs. Eustis left the house and 261 acres to the National Trust for Historic Preservation. In order to protect this valuable resource, the National Trust has acquired and has encouraged the donation of easements on adjacent land and structures.

4. Taylorstown

Taylorstown is located in northern Loudoun County near a low point in the Catoctin Creek and was an early crossing location for the region's Quaker farmers. To the east of Taylorstown is the wooded Catoctin Mountain while the remainder of the land surrounding the hamlet is rolling hills of open pastureland. Taylorstown is a crossroads settlement located at the intersection of State Route 688/633 (Loyalty Road) and State Route 665 (Taylorstown Road).

Quaker farmer Richard Brown established the first mill in the 1730s in this settlement known originally as Millford. This location was chosen for its close proximity to the Potomac River (two miles) and because it was along an established route that connected those traveling from the northeastern section of the county or Maryland to Waterford and Leesburg.

Brown's residence was the 1737 Hunting Hill, which conforms to the dimensions of a house built to satisfy colonial land grant requirements. Brown also built Oakland Green in Goose Creek Historic District. These two dwellings are thought to be among the earliest Quaker homes still standing in Loudoun County.

The present stone mill likely replaced an original log structure and dates to after the mill and house were sold to Thomas Taylor in 1784. The native fieldstone from which the mill was built helped to define the early architecture of the town, as did the Quaker background of many of the early settlers in the area.

Modest development occurred when Taylor sold half-acre lots in the 1790s and 1800s to encourage development of the town that would bear his name. At least four dwellings and a store appear to date from this era.

Taylorstown, originally named Millford, is a small village that evolved from the location of mill as early as 1730. The present mill dates to the late eighteenth century.

B. CHARACTER OF THE HISTORIC DISTRICTS

4. Taylorstown, continued

Taylorstown was one of many small mill hamlets across the county processing wheat in the mid-nineteenth century – Loudoun produced a half-million bushels in 1850. It retained its rural character with minimal new development occurring until after the Civil War.

During the town's most prosperous years, between that war and the Depression, Taylorstown served as a regional trade center. General stores, a school, and a variety of tradespeople including a wheelwright, shoemaker, carpenters, and blacksmiths were located in the hamlet.

The Depression, rerouting of well-traveled roads, and being bypassed by the railroad combined to allow Taylorstown to remain a rare preserved example of an early mill hamlet with minimal modern intrusions.

In terms of architecture, the earliest residential structures were simple one-and-one-half story stone dwellings with gable roofs while the store was a simple frame structure with an end gable roof. Vernacular late-nineteenth-century residences punctuate the early structures and their Victorian details provide a counterpoint to the rough texture and simple lines of the early structures. One of the later structures in the district is the Slater and Hickman Store built in 1938 to replace an earlier structure that burned. Built of paneled concrete-block this store is a rare "modern" structure in the district.

Most residential structures in the district tend to be sited on large parcels radiating from the crossroads intersection. Painted board fencing reinforces the rural character of this district, as does the placement of agricultural outbuildings near the edge of the road.

Aldie, Bluemont, Oatlands and Taylorstown each have a special character. The individual appearance of each of these districts is defined by the style and siting of the various structures that combine to tell the story of the development of each unique area.

NOTE:

Property owners are the next chapter in the history of each district. They have an important responsibility as a steward of a property in a historically significant area. When each property owner contemplates making changes to their property, they should consider those options that contribute to that history rather than detract from it.

Bypassed by railroad and major automobile routes, Taylorstown retains its rural setting.

C. ARCHITECTURAL STYLES/FORMS/TYPES

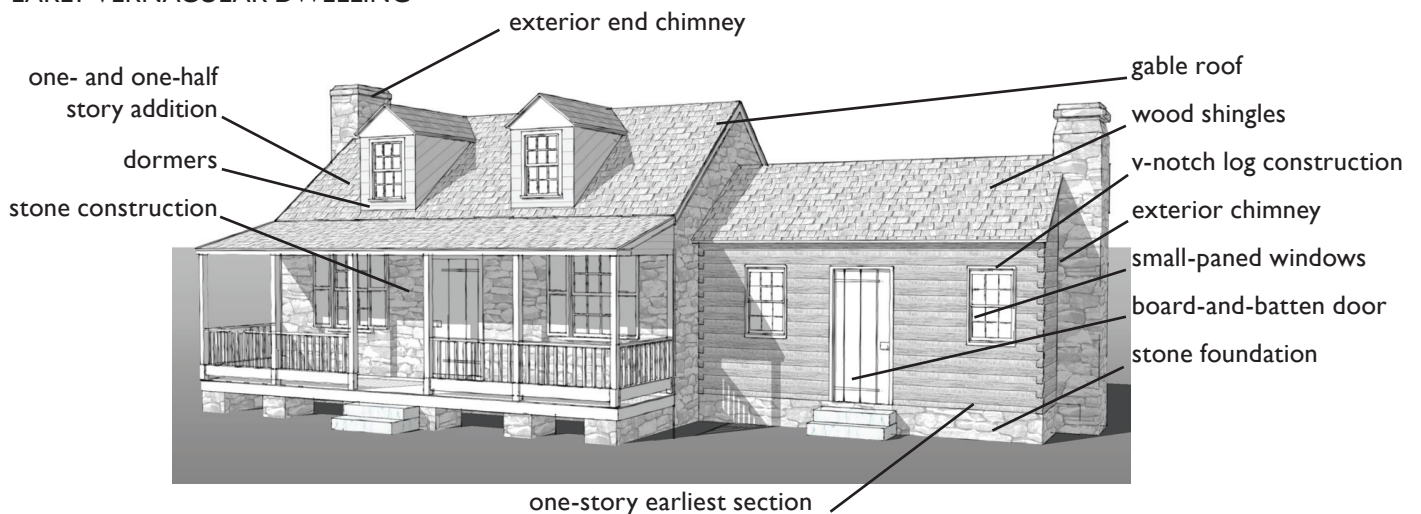### 1. Early Vernacular Dwellings: 1700-1780

The earliest structures were small, and often made of logs. Sometimes referred to as "patent houses," these structures were of a dimension that fulfilled requirements of a land patent required to retain permanent ownership of the lot. As the owner's circumstance improved, a brick or stone dwelling in the vernacular Georgian or Federal style might be attached to the earlier, smaller structure.

Most examples are one to one- and one-half stories and have steeply pitched roofs, large exterior end chimneys, very small window openings, and batten doors.

Hunting Hill, built circa 1737, is the oldest surviving structure in the Taylorstown Historic District.

EARLY VERNACULAR DWELLING

one- and one-half story addition
exterior end chimney
dormers
stone construction
gable roof
wood shingles
v-notch log construction
exterior chimney
small-paned windows
board-and-batten door
stone foundation
one-story earliest section

C. ARCHITECTURAL STYLES/FORMS/TYPES, continued

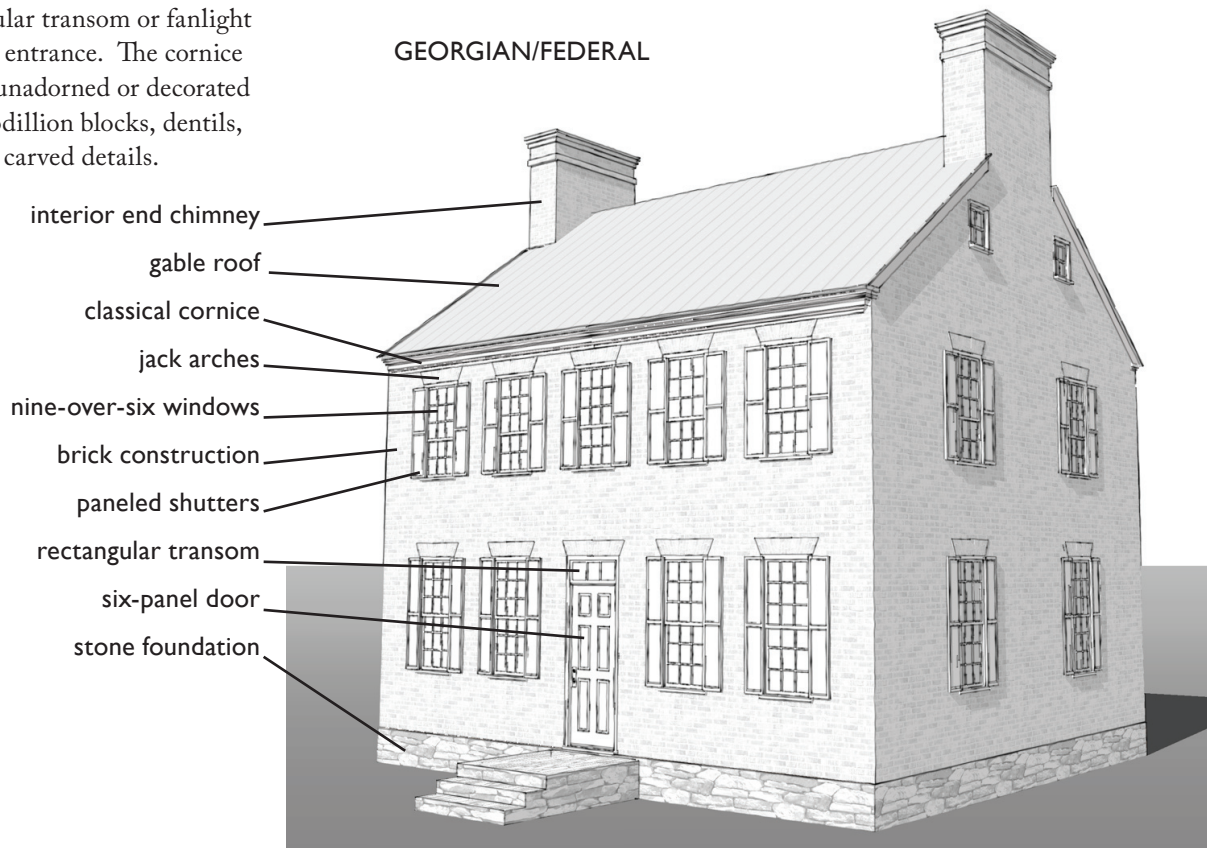### 2. Georgian/Federal: 1770-1830

These residences are usually two stories and have a gable roof and sometimes a raised basement. Wall materials are usually brick or stone, although there are some weatherboard clad examples. Brick patterns may be Flemish or American bond. Exterior end chimneys are seen in some examples, however, interior chimneys gained popularity by the end of the eighteenth century.

Facades are symmetrical, usually with a central entrance. Windows have small panes and are frequently framed with operable shutters. Some examples feature roof dormers.

Decorative details may include a rectangular transom or fanlight over the entrance. The cornice may be unadorned or decorated with modillion blocks, dentils, or other carved details.

This vernacular frame structure exhibits elements of the Federal style. Small window openings retain their six-over-six light construction. Exterior chimneys are constructed of stone and brick, a common regional practice.

GEORGIAN/FEDERAL

interior end chimney
gable roof
classical cornice
jack arches
nine-over-six windows
brick construction
paneled shutters
rectangular transom
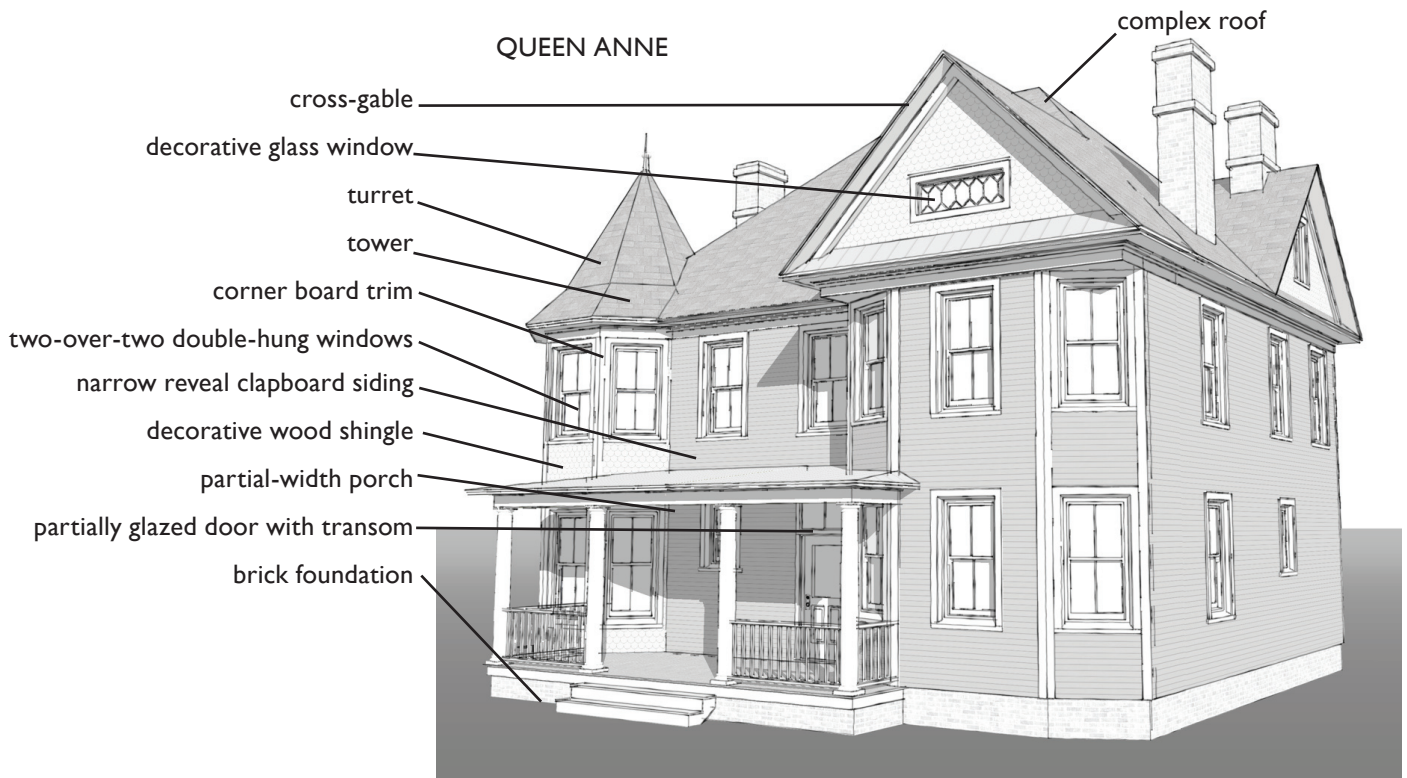six-panel door
stone foundation

As seen in this example, by the end of the Queen Anne period, the massing of many dwellings was returning to a more balanced appearance. The protruding bays, complex roof line, large paned windows, scroll-sawn decorative wooden trim, and wrap around porch still firmly anchor this house in the Queen Anne style.

3. Queen Anne: 1880-1910

These dwellings are characterized by a complex roof, vertical proportions, asymmetrical facades, and a wrap around porch. More elaborate examples are richly decorated with brackets, balusters, window surrounds, bargeboards, and other sawn millwork. The designs may also employ a variety of surface materials such as wood siding, shingles, and brick. Roof turrets, decorative tall chimneys, and a variety of gable forms highlight the skylines of these large residences.

QUEEN ANNE

complex roof

cross-gable

decorative glass window

turret

tower

corner board trim

two-over-two double-hung windows

narrow reveal clapboard siding

decorative wood shingle

partial-width porch

partially glazed door with transom

brick foundation

C. ARCHITECTURAL STYLES/FORMS/TYPES, continued

4. Vernacular Victorian: 1860-1910

Built in the decades surrounding the turn-of-the-century, these predominantly frame houses all have simple Victorian details.
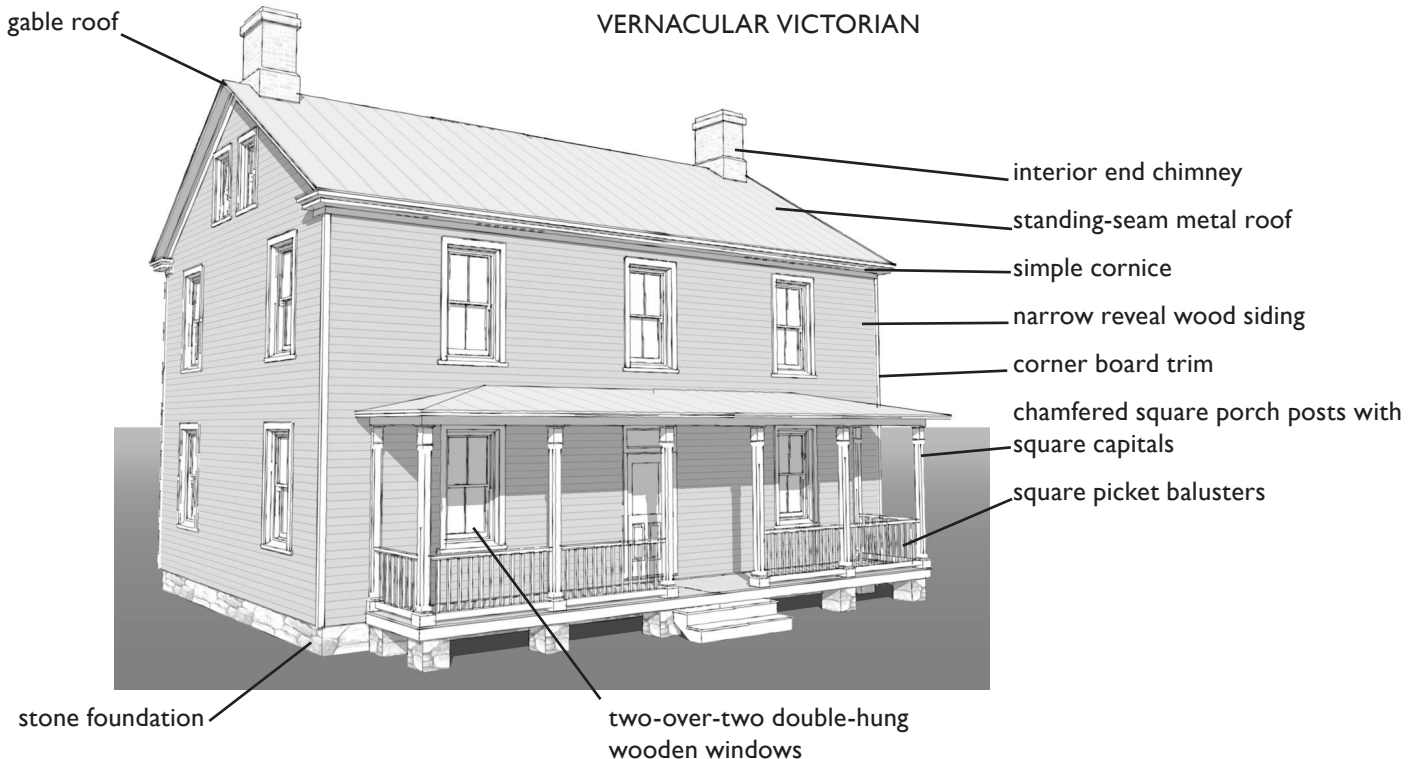
a. I-House (3-bay)

Less complex in its design and decoration than the 5-bay example, the 3-bay I-house is one of the most prevalent house styles of the Victorian era. Examples may or may not have a centered cross-gable.

Other decorative elements are more restrained and may include rectangular porch posts and simple turned balusters. Cornices and trim details around windows and doors are also simplified.

This variation of the 3-bay I-house has a central gable decorated with wooden shingles and scroll-sawn porch elements.

VERNACULAR VICTORIAN

gable roof
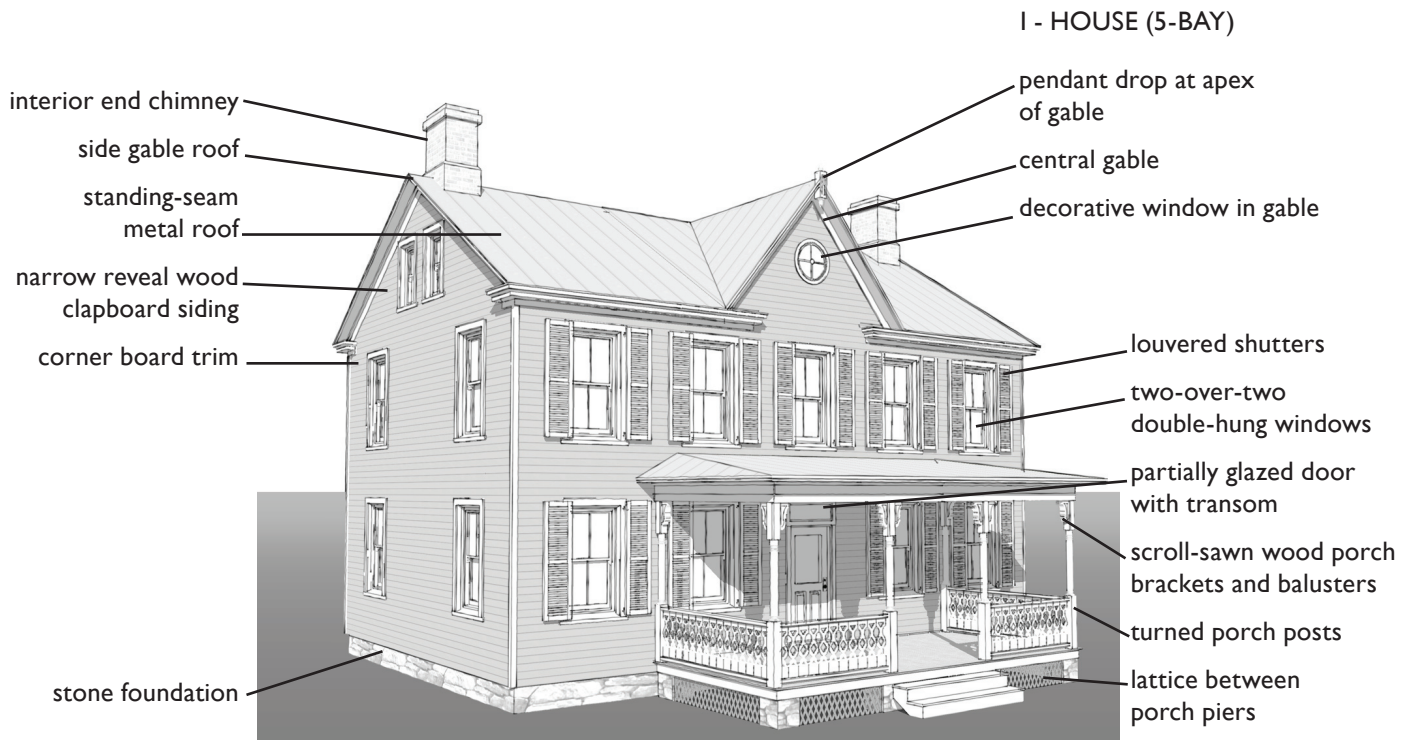
interior end chimney

standing-seam metal roof

simple cornice

narrow reveal wood siding

corner board trim

chamfered square porch posts with square capitals

square picket balusters

stone foundation

two-over-two double-hung wooden windows

b. I-House (5-bay)

This simply designed house is of frame construction, has two stories, five bays, and usually has a one-story front porch that extends across most of the facade.

Many examples include a central gable often highlighted with decorative woodwork or a change in cladding material texture.

I - HOUSE (5-BAY)

- interior end chimney
- side gable roof
- standing-seam metal roof
- narrow reveal wood clapboard siding
- corner board trim
- stone foundation
- pendant drop at apex of gable
- central gable
- decorative window in gable
- louvered shutters
- two-over-two double-hung windows
- partially glazed door with transom
- scroll-sawn wood porch brackets and balusters
- turned porch posts
- lattice between porch piers

This L-Gable dwelling in Bluemont has exposed rafters in the front-gable and scroll-sawn woodwork on its porch.

c. L-Gable

This two-story masonry block dwelling is another vernacular variation. The L-shaped floor plan is covered by a cross-gabled roof and a one-story porch that repeats the "L."

Note the use of three designs of masonry block. The majority of the wall is constructed of a rough-face block, quoins are constructed of smooth-faced block at the corners, and the cornice line and belt-course are delineated by a laurel wreath relief on smooth-faced block.

Wooden accents include the horizontal wood siding on the gable end, window and door trim and porch elements.

C. ARCHITECTURAL STYLES/FORMS/TYPES

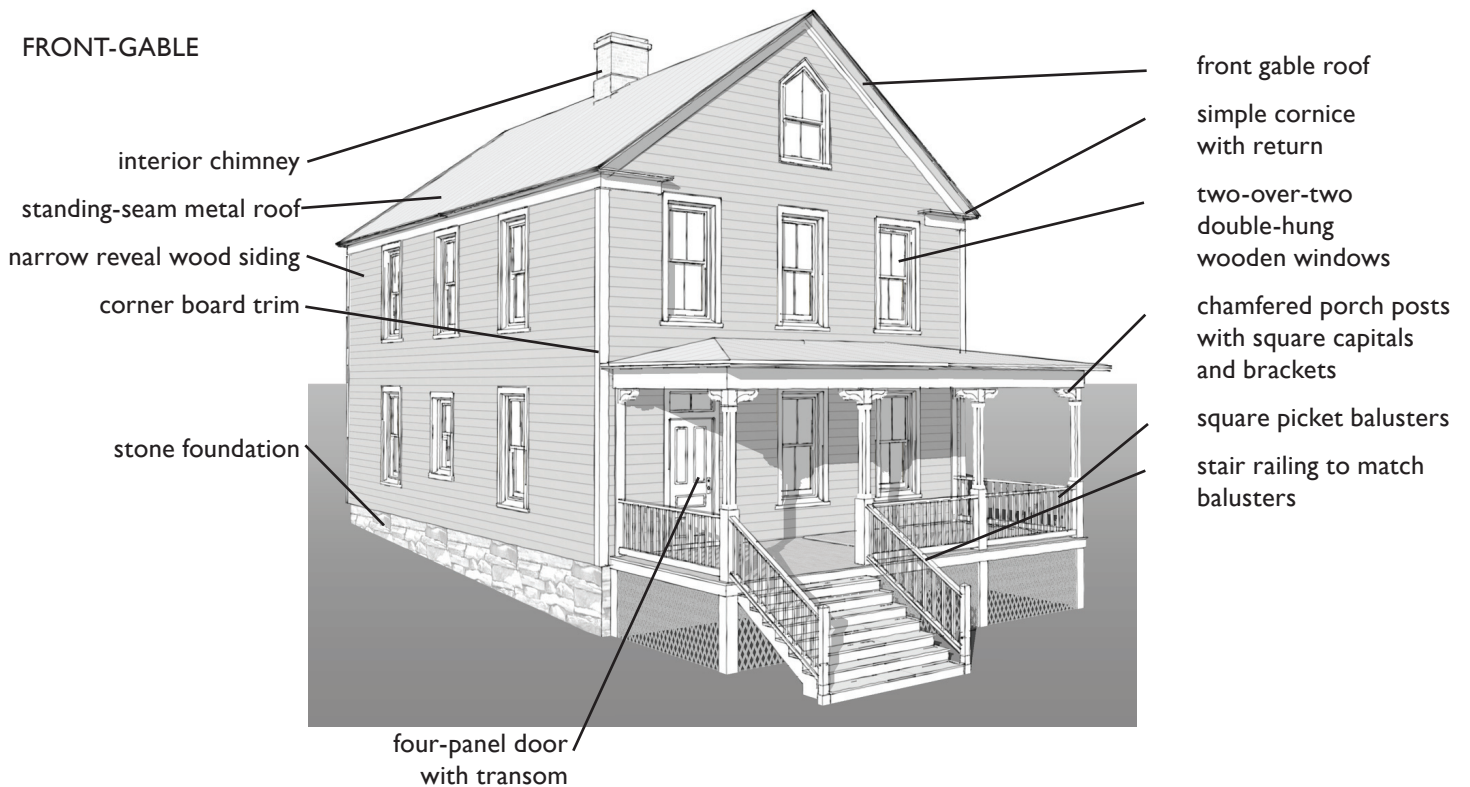## 4. Vernacular Victorian: 1860-1910, continued

d. Front-Gable

By turning the 3-bay I-house 90 degrees, the gable end of the roof becomes the front of the structure and heightens its vertical proportions.

Like cross-gable I-house examples, there is often a window in the gable end of these dwellings. Porches are full width and shelter an asymmetrically placed front door.

This front-gable design is wider than many examples. A bay is visible near the back of the structure and a wrap-around porch has been enclosed on the side.

FRONT-GABLE

- interior chimney
- standing-seam metal roof
- narrow reveal wood siding
- corner board trim
- stone foundation
- four-panel door with transom

- front gable roof
- simple cornice with return
- two-over-two double-hung wooden windows
- chamfered porch posts with square capitals and brackets
- square picket balusters
- stair railing to match balusters

5. Commercial and Institutional Buildings

Although the districts of Aldie, Bluemont, Oatlands and Taylorstown are predominantly residential, the occasional general store, church, or school can be found. Often these commercial or institutional buildings will follow the established designs for their particular use or adapt those more commonly found in residential structures.

The E. E. Lake Store was built in 1905 and has seen little modernization. It is one of few truly commercial form buildings in the historic districts. A parapet wall adds verticality to the facade and provides an appropriate location for the store sign. The full-length porch offers customers a place to rest or catch-up on local news and shades the store's interior.

The districts of Aldie, Taylorstown, and Oatlands each had a mill. Oatland's Carters Mill is now a ruin. The Taylorstown Mill is now a residence. The Aldie Mill, in operation into the 1980s, is open to the public as a historic site.

Note the high water table with a foundation constructed of stone and brick. At over three stories, mills were usually the largest buildings in Loudoun's early villages. The use of gable roof forms, American bond brick construction and small-paned windows tie this form of construction to its residential neighbors.

As villages grew, churches were built to serve the residents. A small congregation still worships at the Church of Our Savior in the Oatlands district. Both the church and accompanying parish house are built in a front-gable style associated with Greek Revival and vernacular Victorian architecture.